



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CONTACT: Deb Rich
401-453-5071 or 741-3130

CHAFEE UNVEILS MAJOR TOURISM INITIATIVE

Submits Two Nominations for Designation on World Heritage List

NEWPORT, RI – Senator Lincoln Chafee today unveiled plans to submit two nominations in Newport's bid to become a U.S. designation on the World Heritage List. The World Heritage List was created in 1972 by a United Nations treaty designed to identify sites whose outstanding values should be preserved for future generations. Placement on the list would foster worldwide attraction to Newport in the rapidly growing international tourism market. The prestige of the designation would raise R.I.'s stature in the view of the rest of the country. The World Heritage List recognizes 812 sites of Natural and/or Cultural value around the world. The U.S. has only 20 World Heritage Sites, including two that are shared with Canada. Examples of sites in the U.S. include: Monticello, Yellowstone National Park, the Statue of Liberty, and Independence Hall. The last time the U.S. had a successful nomination was in 1995 (Carlsbad Caverns).

The two nominations are: "The Lively Experiment", which includes Touro Synagogue, the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, the Great Friends Meeting House, and several other sites which underscore Newport's place in history as the first city to provide for freedom of religion and freedom of expression; and "The Evolution of 19th Century American Architecture", which showcases such sites as The Breakers, Rough Point, Ochre Court, the Newport Casino, and the Griswold House, all fine examples of American architecture built between the Civil War and World War I.

Senator Chafee was joined by Dean Reeder, Director of the National Park Service Tourism Program; and Pieter Roos, Executive Director of the Newport Restoration Foundation. Also attending were local and state elected officials, representatives from various historical and preservation societies, and members of the tourism industry.

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“I am advocating for a World Heritage designation for Newport because I believe we can send a powerful message to the international community that the Lively Experiment is still relevant, especially to today’s emerging nations,” said Senator Chafee. “Newport’s history includes architectural and cultural icons of the late 19th century. These properties are internationally renowned and are major tourist attractions for R.I. and the region.”

“Newport is a city rich in history and civic pride,” said Dean Reeder, of the National Park Service. “Designation on the World Heritage List would be a feather in the cap of this state and region. The prestige that will result from this designation often helps raise awareness among citizens and governments for continuing heritage preservation.”

“The Newport World Heritage Committee was formed two years ago to determine whether this city could effectively compete for inclusion as a World Heritage Site,” said Pieter Roos, Chairman of the Newport World Heritage Committee. “We spent many months consulting with bureaucrats, academicians, advocates and international experts. We have concluded that Newport has the right stuff.”

Requests for U.S. designations to the World Heritage List are first submitted to the National Park Service. If the request is approved by the Secretary of the Interior, the nomination is then submitted to the World Heritage Centre and is evaluated to assess whether it is of outstanding universal value. Eligible evaluations are then put before the World Heritage Committee for a vote. The entire process can take 3-5 years.

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